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The Baltimore Sun

February 16, 2010 Tuesday
FINAL EDITION

SECTION: LOCAL; Pg. 1A

LENGTH: 1105 words

HEADLINE: MOTE TO RETIRE AT END OF SUMMER;
UM PRESIDENT CREDITED WITH FULFILLING AMBITIOUS AGENDA

BYLINE: Childs Walker, childs.walker@baltsun.com

BODY:

C.D. "Dan" Mote Jr. will step down as president of the University of Maryland, College Park at the end of August after 12 years leading the state's flagship public university.

During Mote's tenure, the university increased its research funding by 150 percent, to \$518 million last year; completed the two largest fundraising campaigns in its history; and increased its applicant pool by 78 percent.

Mote also oversaw a building boom that added Comcast Center, a 130-acre research park, a performing arts center, bioscience and engineering buildings, and several other large academic halls. UM finished 18th in the most recent U.S. News and World Report rankings of public universities, up from 30th in 1998, the year Mote arrived.

Mote spoke over the years of walking away quietly with the university on sound footing, and his departure did not come as a total surprise to system, faculty and student leaders.

"Twelve years is a long time, actually longer than I expected," Mote said Monday. "You always want to leave the party before it's over, and people seem to appreciate what we're doing. There's a feeling that the university is on a great track."

State leaders charted an ambitious course for the university 25 years ago, but it was Mote who steered that quest to fulfillment, said William E. Kirwan, chancellor of the University System of Maryland and Mote's predecessor in College Park.

"It has truly become a destination school for the best students in Maryland," Kirwan said. "It plays for Maryland the kind of role that UVA plays in Virginia or Chapel Hill plays in North Carolina."

Mote came to a university on the climb, but he exceeded expectations, said Clifford Kendall, chairman of the

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university system's Board of Regents.

"He inherited a good situation and made it great," Kendall said. "We have so many programs in the top 10 and 20 now. What I liked about Dan was the balance he brought. Every part of the university, whether it was students or facilities or fundraising, moved forward under his watch."

Mote, 73, plans to take a yearlong leave of absence and then return to UM as an engineering professor. The university has not formed a search committee to seek his replacement but will move in that direction this week, said spokesman Millree Williams. Mote said he expects his successor to be in place when he steps down Aug. 31.

Kendall said the system will perform a national search and will not rush to beat a deadline. "In my mind, it should be one of the most appealing jobs in the country," he said. "It won't be a situation where someone is trying to fix anything."

Mote came to College Park from the University of California, Berkeley, where he spent most of his academic career, earning a Bachelor of Science, Master of Science and doctorate, serving on the engineering faculty and rising to vice chancellor. He is a published expert on the biomechanics of snow skiing, among other subjects.

He remembered arriving at College Park without knowing anyone in the Maryland university system and with little sense of the state's politics. The job seemed appealing because of the state's wealth and proximity to Washington, the nation's leading public policy center. But Mote was surprised to find a university held in middling esteem.

"We had to create an expectation of greatness for the campus community and beyond," he said. "That was the goal, because the place really wasn't there in 1998."

Mote always talked big about the future of College Park, and the university gradually adopted his outlook, Kirwan said.

"He has a big vision, and he just would not accept anything less than an all-out effort to realize it," the chancellor said.

Mote has served the fourth-longest tenure of any president in UM's 156-year history, and by many measures, the university has gained the standing he hoped for.

"Over the past 12 years, Dan Mote has led the University of Maryland to achieve the excellence and stature that it enjoys today as one of the leading public research universities in the nation and throughout the world," Joseph Gildenhorn, chairman of the university's board of trustees, and Alma Gildenhorn, co-chair of the university's \$1 billion Great Expectations fundraising campaign, said in a joint statement. "We have enjoyed working with him during that time and greatly admire his leadership and vision."

Mote's last year has not been easy, with state-ordered cuts slashing almost \$50 million from the university's budget and causing unrest among students and faculty. Some student leaders have criticized Mote for staying behind the scenes during budget controversies.

But student body president Steve Glickman said Mote has always been frank about the budget and diligent in sending e-mails to keep students informed about cuts.

"It's hard for students to build relationships with the president of a university this size, but those who did may be a little upset about him leaving, because we really did like him," Glickman said. "He was very open and honest in our relationship, always willing to tell it like it is."

Mote had lunch with any student who asked, and set up the President's Promise, a guarantee that every student would have access to an out-of-class program such as independent research, travel abroad or internships.

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"The university is 100 percent better than when he came," Glickman said, noting the rise in national rankings.

Faculty members appreciated Mote for his approachability, said Frank Alt, a longtime business professor and the university's representative on the statewide Faculty Advisory Council.

"We knew it was coming," Alt said of Mote's impending departure. "Am I disappointed? Yes, because he was the right man for the job. He was very good at relating to people. Here was a person who had to deal with things at a very broad level but who also didn't hesitate to look at the details."

For example, he said, Mote reviewed decisions on whether to offer tenure to faculty members. "He knew how important that is to a university," Alt said.

When asked about his fun moments at College Park, Mote recalled establishing the Maryland Incentive Awards recruiting program for Baltimore City and Prince George's County students, cutting down the nets when the men's basketball team won the national championship in 2002 and getting the U.S. Naval Academy back on the football schedule.

He said that in the near future, the university will achieve a major expansion of East Campus, attract new business to its research park, and expand the system's biotechnology research center at Shady Grove.

"I think it can become one of the truly great public research universities in the country," he said.

GRAPHIC: Photo(s)

1. Mote 2. C.D. "Dan" Mote Jr. joins in a pep rally for the 2003 Gator Bowl in Jacksonville, Fla. Mote has served the fourth-longest tenure of any president at the University of Maryland.
2. Lloyd Fox/Baltimore Sun photo

LOAD-DATE: February 17, 2010